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## Degas at the Ballet ("On the Stage", 1876-77; Art Institute)

Mardelle Fortier  
*College of DuPage*

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# Degas at the Ballet ("On the Stage," 1876-77; Art Institute)

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Mardelle Fortier

Everything billows: chiffon gowns, long hair.  
Arms circle over heads, blues and whites become fluid  
magic.

Nothing can be pinned down: not the silky  
slippers, nor the light.  
Everything is vanishing, as flying legs leap offstage  
and a smile lasts only as long as a note.

Bright blossoms, satin dresses, dance your joy  
and hope that Degas can capture changing lilac shades  
and regal youth; dreams of eternal music.

In this illusion, the painter lives, eyes trained  
on a scene that can last  
only if his brush is pure and sure.